



U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL
MATERIALS AGENCY

FACT SHEET

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Anniston Chemical Activity

VX Agent Trial Burn Plans

Destroying chemical munitions stored at Anniston Army Depot is a complex process closely managed by the U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency (CMA), with oversight by federal and state agencies. The primary goal is to destroy the chemical munitions stockpile in a safe and cost-effective manner that protects the community, the work force and the environment. When the Anniston Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (ANCDF) prepares to dispose of chemical nerve agents (GB, VX), mustard (HD, HT), drained munitions, contaminated refuse, bulk containers, and explosive and propellant components, it follows carefully thought out procedures according to an approved plan.

Before the ANCDF began disposal of nerve agent VX, it verified the processes in advance of full-scale disposal and in accordance with stringent guidelines set by oversight agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency and the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM). The verification process is referred to as an agent trial burn. Prior to testing, ANCDF management submitted its plans for each furnace used in the agent trial burn to ADEM. The plan outlined evaluation procedures and analytical criteria. It also included information such as sampling methods used to test the pollution abatement system for the liquid incinerator, metal parts furnace and deactivation furnace. The agent trial burn also demonstrates compliance with performance standards and establishes operating conditions for full-scale disposal operations.

What is an agent trial burn?

As required by the ANCDF Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) permit, issued by ADEM, the ANCDF must conduct a successful agent trial burn in which actual nerve agent is destroyed. During this process, ANCDF, with oversight by ADEM, evaluates the normal operating conditions of each furnace to ensure they can be operated in a manner that is safe to human health and the environment.

An agent trial burn tests an incinerator's ability to meet all applicable performance standards when burning a chemical agent under a specific set of operating conditions that comply with strict federal standards set forth by the Clean Air Act and the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Waste Combustors. The ANCDF trial burn is designed to provide data demonstrating the facility's capabilities.

Why is an agent trial burn required?

The ANCDF operates according to rules and regulations set forth under the RCRA Act of 1976. According to this federal mandate, technological processes used to complete the disposal process must meet the safety standards set forth by this act. As part of the U.S. Army's compliance with RCRA, a successful agent trial burn is required to be completed before the facility is allowed to conduct normal, full-scale VX disposal operations.

Who oversees this process?

During the actual agent trial burn, members of ADEM are on site to ensure that the testing is completed in accordance with the plan submitted by the ANCDF.

Further, many agencies provide oversight to the entire Army Chemical Stockpile Elimination Project to ensure the ANCDF operations meet all applicable regulatory standards and protect the community, the work force and the environment. These oversight agencies include: Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Occupational Safety and Health Administration and ADEM.

For more information about the ANCDF, contact the Anniston Chemical Demilitarization Community Outreach Office at (256) 238-0120.



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